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Life @1st Church

905 Glendale Avenue, South Charleston, WV 25303

VOLUME 7 ISSUE 3

March 2021

A Note from Pastor Paul

Greetings Church Family

One year ago, in the midst of planning for Lent and Easter activities and services around the church, we were shut down by the Covid 19 Virus. We complied with requests thinking this will be a few weeks or maybe a couple of months. Little did we realize that one year later we are still in pandemic restrictions. Now, however, I believe we may be seeing the light at the end of the tunnel. Let us pray it is not a train.

I suppose that one year is just a blip in history. Let's remember the Israelites wandered in the desert for forty years. We should celebrate how fast our scientists and doctors have responded with the various vaccines. Soon we should reach a herd immunity and life will return to a sense of normalcy but maybe a little different. If you have gotten your vaccine, GREAT, if not schedule one as soon as possible and follow through.

As we prepare to reopen our live services, we must realize that there is planning and preparation that needs to be done. Groups need to lay out their plans and timing. Choirs and praise teams need to practice and determine how they will present themselves in the worship service. We also need to continue the momentum and advances we have made in our online presence. We may have been forced into the online world, but it is here to stay in the life of the church.

With all of that being said here is what I need you to do to make our Re-Launch date of Palm Sunday a reality:

Pray for the health of our church and her leaders.
Mask up and follow the guidelines.
Volunteer to help in whatever way you can.

I believe we can make 2021 a most productive year in the life of First United Methodist South Charleston.

Until we once again meet face to face, I remain...

Pastor Paul

UMW 1st Quarter Mission Project by Sharen Sumpter Deitz

The United Methodist Women sponsored a First Quarter Mission Project to help Heart + Hand replenish their Food Pantry. The UMW accepted nonperishable food items at the church in January and February for Heart + Hand.

Due to the ice and snow storm in February we were unable to accept the food items in person but “The Miracle of First Church” came through and brought food items to the church. UMW also presented H+H with a check for \$175 for a souper bowl donation. Thanks to everyone who donated.

There will be another food drive on **Monday, March 15, 2021**, please bring your nonperishable food items to the church. See announcement on page 4 for detailed information.



Sharen Sumpter Deitz is shown delivering the food items to Heart + Hand Food Pantry.

Grab Your Paint Brush and Meet Us At the Church

Are you tired of sitting around the house? Feel the need to be useful? Maybe you want to burn off some COVID weight? Well the Trustees have opportunities for you to get out of the house and help beautify our church!

We have several areas around the church that need a fresh coat of paint. Just let me or Pastor Paul know if you would like to help with this need. Below is a list of what we would like to accomplish:

1. Paint the Chapel.
2. Paint three rooms in the basement
3. Paint the door in the Social Hall that leads up the stairs to the Sanctuary
4. Outside we need to paint the stucco around our church sign and the cross on the sign.
5. Repair the stage tile (black stripe at very front)

Thanks!

Joyce French,
Chairperson of Trustees

March Prayer by David Biondi

Almighty, loving and most merciful God, with the coming of March we are so very grateful that the arrival of springtime is just around the corner, for it has indeed been a long and challenging winter. The severe storms of recent days have caused so much hardship throughout our land with the disruption of power, the lack of available clean water and hazardous weather conditions for so many people. These things coupled with the effects of the ongoing pandemic have caused no small amount of fear and uncertainty in the lives of many; and so, O God, we look to you for our deliverance and for the promise of better times ahead.

We are most thankful that the roll-out of the coronavirus vaccines has finally begun to take shape in a meaningful way so as to (hopefully) combat this dreaded disease. But concerns continue to surround the pandemic due to the new variant strains of the virus having emerged in recent days. Dear God, please give guidance and insight to the scientists and researchers as to how to deal with these variants so that the pandemic will not be prolonged. Please also continue to sustain and protect the doctors, nurses and the many other front-line work-

ers as well as teachers, students, service personnel and all those who, by virtue of their employment and proximity to others, may be at a greater risk for contracting and transmitting the disease. And please, by your power and grace, bring an end to this crisis once and for all.

O God, lest we become overly preoccupied with these worries, help us not to forget or be neglectful of the spiritual dimension of our lives. May we be mindful that we are in the midst of the Lenten Season -- a time to prepare our hearts and lives for the coming of Easter and the celebration of our Lord's Resurrection. Help us, we pray, to keep a holy Lent. Inspire us to reflect thoughtfully upon our commitment to and relationship with you whereby we would recognize and acknowledge our weaknesses and shortcomings so that we might genuinely repent of our sins. In so doing, may we experience a spiritual restoration in our lives and a renewal of our Christian conviction which will enable us to draw all the more closer to you and to one another both here and every where. These things we pray in your most holy and precious name. Amen.

Seeking a creative person to take over the monthly newsletter. Is it you?

Barbara Brown has decided to pass the creation and distribution of the monthly church newsletter over to a new person. Are you interested in creating the monthly newsletter? If you are, please contact Pastor Paul or Linda at 304-744-3211.



HEART + HAND FOOD PANTRY

Join the United Methodist Women as we help refill the Heart + Hand Food Pantry. There are many more requests for food during the winter, especially for those families with children. COVID-19 has caused heightened food insecurity within our community.

In celebration of St. Patrick's Day and the "**wearin' o' the green**" we are asking you to help us support the Heart + Hand Food Pantry by picking up some of the items listed below.

We will have a donation site set up at the church parking lot near the parsonage.
You may drop off your donations on:

Monday, March 15th from 11:00 am – 1:00 pm

**If this time isn't convenient, you can bring your donations to the church
Monday-Thursday 10:00 am to 3:00 pm**

Suggested food items:

CANNED GREEN BEANS AND CANNED POTATOES

If you would like to make a monetary donation, please make your check payable to United Methodist Women and mail to the church noting on the memo line **H+H Food Pantry**.

This is a United Methodist Women First Quarter Social Action Mission Project.

**First United Methodist Church 905 Glendale Avenue
South Charleston 25303**

Men paint shelter, are invited to meet with Bishop, and have opportunity to participate in 'potato drop'

The First Church men will discuss several ongoing projects when they meet virtually at 9 a.m. March 6.

President Mike Warwick will report on painting work at the women's shelter being constructed at the former Rock Lake Pool property. Mike, his wife Sandy, and George Hohmann are among those who have been painting.

At 6 p.m. on March 11, the Cross Lanes United Methodist Men will host a Zoom meeting with Bishop Sandra Steiner Ball. The Cross Lanes men have invited First Church men to the meeting. For a Zoom invitation, e-mail Jerry Meadows at jwmead@frontier.com.

The Little Kanawha District United Methodist Men invite First Church men and others in the Midland South District to participate in a potato distribution on March 13.

On that date, fellows from eight counties around Parkersburg will distribute potatoes to food pantries throughout the Little Kanawha District.

Everyone will meet at Edgelawn UMC, just off I-77, at 7:30 a.m. for socially distanced coffee and doughnuts. Volunteers will then be assigned to crews that will distribute the potatoes.

This is a wonderful opportunity to learn how a small army of volunteers can distribute more than 40,000 pounds of potatoes in about three hours. The hope is that the men of the Midland South District will organize a "potato drop" in the Kanawha Valley sometime in the future — perhaps November.

To participate in this worthy outreach project, contact George Hohmann by e-mail at g.hohmann48@gmail.com or by phone at 304 419-1916.



Photo by Sandy Warwick
First Church Men's President Mike Warwick and Vice President George Hohmann prepare to paint the library at the women's shelter being constructed at the former Rock Lake Pool property.

Free bi-weekly newsletter features UM men's news from across W.Va.

Keep up with United Methodist Men's news from across the state by signing up to receive The West Virginia United Methodist Men's Journal.

The Journal, a free publication, is delivered by e-mail every other Friday. The next issue will be published on March 5. To subscribe, send a request to Jerry Meadows at jwmead@frontier.com.

Sign-ups for plots in Community Garden are underway

Sign-ups for plots in the Community Garden are underway. For more information or to request a plot contact George Hohmann by e-mail at g.hohmann48@gmail.com or by phone at 304 419-1916.

Plans are being made for a work day that will focus on repairing or replacing the garden fence, which took a beating over the winter.

Prayer Request Guidelines

New guidelines for prayer requests: Any prayer requests that are to be mentioned during the upcoming online Sunday service must be sent to 1stumcsc@gmail.com by Wednesday evening. Prayer requests made after Wednesday will be read the following week. Additional prayer requests can be sent to 1stumcsc@gmail.com at any time. Also, all prayer requests will be read for two weeks unless we are notified otherwise.

Did you miss an online service? Want to see the service again or share with family and friends? Visit: <https://www.youtube.com> and enter FUMC South Charleston into the search bar to locate the recorded sermons. We have over 22 recorded sermons to view.

Know someone who would like to follow our service, but doesn't have Facebook or internet service? Try our Sermon by phone option. Sermons are uploaded and available all week at anytime. Call 1-304-223-3080 to hear our latest sermon.

Spring Cleaning is just around the corner. A new shipment of **Brooms** has arrived. Be sure to get a new broom to sweep out the cobwebs and dust bunnies. At \$10 a broom, you could pick one up for your next door neighbor, bff, or daughter-in-law. Check with the office or the UM Women to make a purchase.

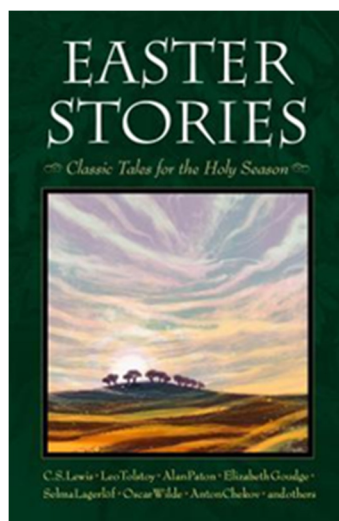




United
Methodist
Women
FAITH • HOPE • LOVE IN ACTION

Peace, Love and Books March 2021

by Teresa Matheny



Easter Stories: Classic Tales for the Holy Season

by C.S. Lewis (Compilation)

Everyone who believes Easter is about more than bunnies and eggs will be grateful for this new collection of short stories that shed light on the deeper meaning of the season. Selected for their spiritual value and literary quality, these classic tales capture the spirit of Easter in a way that will captivate readers of all ages. Parents and grandparents will find that children love to hear these stories read aloud, year after year.

"Easter Stories" includes time-honored favorites from world-famous storytellers such as C.S. Lewis, Leo Tolstoy, Selma Lagerlof, Oscar Wilde, Elizabeth Goudge, Maxim Gorky, Ruth Sawyer, and Walter Wangerin as well as many you've never heard before. Illustrated with original woodcuts.

This book is located on the United Methodist Women reading cart in the church library.
SPIRITUAL GROWTH

UMW 2019 Reading Program Awards

Last month I recognized the women that completed the UMW 2020 Reading Program . This month I am recognizing the women that completed the **UMW 2019 Reading Program**. Those women are: Barbara Brown, Ruth Conrad, Sharen Sumpter Deitz, Donna Haynes, Peggy King, Teresa Matheny, Jeri Whitten, and Nancy Wolfe. Congratulations!

Teresa Matheny

Graceful Generosity

Published to help you grow as a steward of God's grace.

A Stewardship Thought

God-pleasing stewards are faithful in their prayer life, reading God's Word, worshipping, and receiving God's Sacraments. God-pleasing stewards are faithful stewards of the Gospel and personal witness. God-pleasing stewards are faithful stewards of the compassionate love of Jesus for others. God-pleasing stewards are faithful stewards of their time, talents, and treasures. God-pleasing stewards are faithful stewards of the kingdom of God in their families, in their work, and in daily living.

On the Lighter Side

A fellow office worker tells his friend, "My good man, you really should consider attending our church service on Sunday. We respect all denominations. We especially respect twenties and fifties."

Testing your Knowledge of Scripture

Do you know who Joseph the Levite was in Scripture?

If you said Barnabas, you were right. In Acts 4:36-37 we read, "*Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, whom the apostles called Barnabas (which means Son of Encouragement), sold a field he owned and brought the money and put it at the apostles' feet.*" In the early church, there were no needy people because no one claimed that any of their possessions were their own. Through the working of the Holy Spirit, they shared with one another. Those with plenty gave to those in need. Barnabas willingly gave the land he owned for the work of the apostles.

With God's help, you can give freely and generously of the blessings that God has entrusted to you.



Not to Be Served But to Serve

The words of Matthew 20:28 - "Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many" – remind us that the life of Jesus was one of total sacrifice. It is clear that Jesus wanted to develop a servant spirit in his disciples and in us. He said in Matthew 20:26, ". . . whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant." He lived for his heavenly Father and for others. In the same way Jesus served his Father, we exist to serve him. Being conformed into the image of God we will take on the role of servants.

The concept of serving rather than being served is not a natural one. We have an inborn desire to want to be served ourselves and to have our own needs met rather than to see to others. We by nature prefer to be "number one." In addition, our apathy contributes to our lack of interest in sharing. God loves changing our mindset from wanting attention for ourselves to serving others. Seeing others as our brothers and

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sisters in Christ helps us to follow God's command to love our neighbor as ourselves (Mark 12:31).



A life of service and servanthood is contrary to what our society promotes. We are told that we should aspire to fame, power, and wealth. In servanthood there is no glory, spotlight, or fame. A meaningful relationship with Christ is not possible if we put ourselves first and only seek the goals that are important to the world we live in. Living a life of service, we give of ourselves without striving for financial rewards or glory. Unlike the praise we receive from God, worldly praise has no lasting value. Along with the Apostle Paul we say, *"We are not*

trying to please men but God, who tests our hearts" (1 Thessalonians 2:4). As a servant, Jesus was not looking for praise from the masses, because he was only interested in glorifying his Father.

Second Corinthians 12:15 says, *"So I will gladly spend for you everything I have and expend myself as well."* Because of our desire to serve Jesus, we begin to identify with the interest that he has in other peoples' lives. We forego our interests and begin to live a life of Christian service. *"You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love"* (Galatians 5:13).

Our freedom should express itself in the form of service. God brings us into a proper relationship with himself so we can understand what service he expects from us. Jesus lived a life of compassion for others. He continually served the hungry, handicapped, and homeless, and we are called to be imitators of Christ (Ephesians 5:1). When we commit to serving others, it is not done for our own satisfaction or to put ourselves on a pedestal. We serve out of love for Christ and to be worthy of his calling.

Tithing is not a gimmick to solve the economic problems of churches; it is a significant act of remembering who we are.

Blessings on Your Stewardship Journey!

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Kroger Rewards

If you have a customer account with Kroger, have you named First Church to receive your "Community Rewards" points? After you sign in to your account, you can go to "My Account" then to "community rewards" and see if you are signed up and who gets your rewards. The church is organization JK383-First UMC of South Charleston, WV. If you have previously signed up, please check to make sure it is still current. They contribute 5 cents of every dollar you spend with them. That can be a big help for our church!

March Celebrations

Birthdays

01 Larry Wolfe	20 Sydney Young
03 Sharen Sumpter-Deitz	21 William Holbrook
05 Renee Swisher, Karen Buckley	22 Spencer Fultineer
10 Walter Coleman	25 Lisa Workman
11 Betty Jo Johnson	26 Cody Buckley
15 Sara Hampton	27 Alva Deardorff, Gary Good, Laura Richo
16 Laura Good	29 Susie Brewer, Christopher Matheny
	30 Fern Swisher

Anniversaries

09 George and Malissa Hohmann

Special Upcoming Events To Remember

March 11	UMM Zoom Meeting with Bishop (page 5)
March 13	UMM Potato Distribution (page 5)
March 15	UMW Food Donation Drive (Page 4)

Church Website: southcharlestonfirstumc.org

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